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**Contact:** Aurelio Rojas 213-280-6579

James Bolden 213-200-5314

**MTA BOARD UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTS \$1.7 BILLION  
CRENSHAW TO LAX TRANSIT CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL  
SYSTEM CHAMPIONED BY SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS**

*The light rail project will generate 7,800 jobs*

**LOS ANGELES** – Calling it a “huge victory for the residents of Los Angeles County,” Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today praised the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s (MTA) unanimous vote to build a light rail system through the 8.5-square-mile Crenshaw to Los Angeles International Airport Corridor.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas hailed the approval of the rail line as a goal set forth “more than a quarter-century ago, beginning with Mayor Tom Bradley all the way to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, as Julian Dixon and Diane Watson stood behind it in the middle.”

“Light rail – rather than a rapid bus alternative – was the overwhelming choice of the 400 people who attended four public hearings, many of whom packed today’s MTA Board meeting,” the Supervisor said following the vote.

He acknowledged the thunderous applause that erupted in the board room and from two additional rooms set up to accommodate an overflow of community supporters and stakeholders.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas championed the \$1.7 billion project, which according to MTA staff projections will generate 7,800 jobs – twice as many as the bus rapid transit alternative would have produced.

"Through local hiring we're going to make sure we are benefitting the local economy the most," said Jenny Wood, speaking on behalf of Assembly Speaker Karen Bass. "Along with the transportation benefits of the rail line, its construction would be an important generator of work for residents."

The day was a notable victory all around for Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, who has fought to ensure that safety issues and concerns of business are addressed. The MTA Board also approved his proposal to study the feasibility of a 0.9 mile below grade rail connection between 48<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The Supervisor's request was in response to an overwhelming number of residents who called for the study during MTA's extensive community outreach to solicit comments on the project's Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

"This project is long overdue and will provide congestion relief, improve air quality and serve as an economic catalyst," said the Supervisor, who was also successful in moving up the timeline for the project from 2029 to between 2016 and 2018.

Clergy, business and community leaders, and representatives of elected officials were among those on hand to express support for the rail line that will run through the cities of Los Angeles, Inglewood, Hawthorne, and El Segundo, as well as unincorporated areas of the County and Los Angeles International Airport.

The light rail will be the first alternative transportation project to relieve congestion on the 405 Freeway and other north-south arteries in the west portion of Los Angeles County and provide clean, efficient transportation to LAX.

"This is huge victory for the people who live along this corridor and South Bay Community and literally a quarter century late in coming. This will have a hugely positive impact on the Crenshaw Corridor in the South Bay."

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